

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON TORNADES IN THE UNITED STATES DURING 1945

by J. L. BALDWIN

(Weather Bureau, Washington, D. C.)

The total number of tornadoes reported during 1945 was 136, or 5 less than the annual average number for the 1916-1945 period. The seasonal distribution was somewhat unusual; in March there were 30, an unusually large number for March, while in May only 24 occurred, 7 less than the average number for that month. Three-fourths of the year's total occurred in the 4 months from March to June. Tornadoes occurred in 26 States, all east of the Rocky Mountains, and were especially widespread in June when they were reported in 13 States.

There were 198 deaths, or 39 less than the average annual toll caused by tornadoes; about 1,504 people were injured. The number of deaths and injuries was high during April, especially on the 12th, when 119 lost their lives and over 800 were injured in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, and Illinois. No deaths, however, were attributed to 17 tornadoes in Iowa and the same number in Kansas during the year.

Property damage for the year was tabulated at \$21,724,500, about twice the usual destruction. More than three-fourths of this occurred in April and June. Damage was extremely high in Illinois, New York, and Oklahoma, with a total loss of \$14,880,000 in these three States, or seven-tenths of the total suffered by the entire country.

The first tornadoes of the year occurred on February 12, when a series of 7 struck Mississippi and Alabama, with a loss of 41 lives, 416 injured, and about \$2,300,000 property damage. One of these moved northeastward through Montgomery, Ala., at about 5:22 p. m., with a forward speed of 49 miles per hour, killing 26 persons, injuring 293, and causing property damage estimated at \$1,700,000.

March was notable for the severe tornado which occurred in Indiana, crossing east-northeastward across Posey, Vanderburg, Warrick, and Dubois Counties from 3 to 4 a. m. of the 17th.

The greatest tornado disaster during 1945 occurred at Antlers, Okla., on April 12, when 69 persons were killed and about 353 injured as the storm passed through business and residential districts of the city. On the same date a tornado severely damaged the State School for the Blind at Muskogee, Okla., killing 13 persons, injuring 113. Another twister skirted the southeast edge of Oklahoma City on the 12th, killing 8 persons and injuring 200. These storms made April 12 the worst single day of tornado disaster in the history of Oklahoma. Other storms on the 13th, 14th, and 15th in Oklahoma caused 4 deaths at Hulbert, 3 at Red Oak, 1 near Ardmore, and 5 in sections of Sequoyah County.

Tornado activity on April 12 extended to Arkansas, Missouri, and Illinois. In Logan, Johnson, and Madison Counties, Ark., tornadoes killed 22 people, injured many, and destroyed considerable property. A series of three or more struck southwestern and northeastern Missouri

between 7 p. m. and 10 p. m. (C. W. T.), resulting in 7 deaths, injury to 74 persons, and property damage estimated at \$675,000. These tornadoes were evidently a continuation of storms which occurred in Arkansas and Oklahoma earlier in the day and moved in a northeasterly direction across Missouri into Illinois, alternately lifting and descending along the path of progression. One tornado crossed into Illinois near Palmyra, Mo., about 10:20 p. m., and moved northeastward through the business district of Quincy in Adams County, continuing into Hancock and McDonough Counties. Most of the damage was caused at roof level of high buildings in Quincy; the tornado evidently did not reach the ground.

June brought the occurrence of a tornado in an area which rarely experiences one. In Jamestown, N. Y., on the 10th, a path 2 blocks wide and 1 mile long was cut through the west side of the city; although extensive destruction was caused in a populated district, no lives were lost. June 27 brought the occurrence of a series of tornadoes, which lowered as "funnels" from a parent cloud crossing Iowa and Illinois. The first struck the northeast edge of Davenport, Iowa, at 8 p. m.; five or six spirals were observed as the cloud crossed the Mississippi River into the area around Moline, Ill., but no important destruction occurred; major damage occurred near Hoopole about 9 p. m., in northern Bureau County between 10:15 and 10:30 p. m., and near LaSalle between 11 and 11:25 p. m.

On September 1 a tornado struck in the township of North Windham, Maine, at 5:30 p. m. (E. S. T.); this section of the country is seldom visited by a tornado.

A number of tornadoes were associated with hurricanes. A small tornado occurred near LaBelle, Fla., on June 23, at the time the Gulf hurricane of June 20-27 was crossing the Florida peninsula. On August 27, the hurricane that lashed the Texas coast from August 24-29 was located about 60 miles southwest of Houston; a tornado moving from southeast to northwest along a path about 75 yards wide struck the earth several times in a distance of about 22 miles, hitting the northern outskirts of Houston about 11:20 p. m. On September 17, at 7:30 a. m., a tornado struck Gourdin, S. C., 75 miles north-northeast of the center of the hurricane which was moving inland between Charleston and Savannah on that date.

Tornadoes that occurred during 1945 are summarized in Table 1; it shows the approximate monthly and annual number of tornadoes and the deaths, injuries, and property damage caused by them in the several States and the country as a whole. Material was derived from data on "Severe Local Storms" appearing in the MONTHLY WEATHER REVIEW and in monthly CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA of the various sections of the United States. A final and more complete report will appear in the UNITED STATES METEOROLOGICAL YEARBOOK, 1945.

TABLE 1.—Tornadoes and probable tornadoes

State ¹	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Annual
Alabama:													
Number		8		1							1	1	11
Deaths		36		0							0	0	36
Injuries		376		0							2	0	378
Damage (\$×1,000)		1,947.5		75.0							(*)	27.5	\$ 2,050.0
Arkansas:													
Number			2	1									3
Deaths			0	22									22
Injuries			0	(*)									(*)
Damage (\$×1,000)			(*)	(*)									(*)
Florida:													
Number			1	2	1	2				1			7
Deaths			0	0	0	0				1			1
Injuries			0	8	0	0				4			12
Damage (\$×1,000)			15.0	23.0	(*)	6.0				50.0			94.0
Georgia:													
Number		1		3								1	5
Deaths		1		7								0	8
Injuries		0		18								0	18
Damage (\$×1,000)		10.0		190.0								0	200.0
Illinois:													
Number				1		4							5
Deaths				0		1							1
Injuries				25		94							119
Damage (\$×1,000)				2,230.0		3,100.0							5,330.0
Indiana:													
Number			1		1	2	1			1			6
Deaths			0		0	0	0			0			0
Injuries			20		0	0	0			1			21
Damage (\$×1,000)			1,000.0		150.0	21.0	1.0			150.0			1,322.0
Iowa:													
Number			3	2	11	1							17
Deaths			0	0	0	0							0
Injuries			0	1	9	0							10
Damage (\$×1,000)			95.0	50.0	155.0	(*)							\$ 300.0
Kansas:													
Number			2	1	5	5		1		3			17
Deaths			0	0	0	0		0		0			0
Injuries			0	0	1	0		0		0			1
Damage (\$×1,000)			27.0	0	103.0	150.0		6.0		6.0			292.0
Louisiana:													
Number			3	1		1							5
Deaths			0	4		0							4
Injuries			0	(*)		0							(*)
Damage (\$×1,000)			(*)	265.0		40.0							305.0
Maine:													
Number									1				1
Deaths									0				0
Injuries									1				1
Damage (\$×1,000)									7.5				7.5
Mississippi:													
Number		1	1									1	3
Deaths		5	0									3	8
Injuries		40	0									0	40
Damage (\$×1,000)		300.0	6.0									(*)	306.0
Missouri:													
Number				3		1	1						5
Deaths				7		0	0						7
Injuries				74		5	0						79
Damage (\$×1,000)				675.0		(*)	90.0						\$ 765.0
Montana:													
Number						1							1
Deaths						0							0
Injuries						0							0
Damage (\$×1,000)						0							0
Nebraska:													
Number							1						1
Deaths													
Injuries													
Damage (\$×1,000)													
New Jersey:													
Number							1						1
Deaths							0						0
Injuries							0						0
Damage (\$×1,000)							50.0						50.0
New York:													
Number						1							1
Deaths						0							0
Injuries						10							10
Damage (\$×1,000)						5,000.0							5,000.0
North Carolina:													
Number				1									1
Deaths				0									0
Injuries				(*)									(*)
Damage (\$×1,000)				75.0									75.0
Ohio:													
Number									1				1
Deaths									0				0
Injuries									0				0
Damage (\$×1,000)									(*)				(*)
Oklahoma:													
Number			4	7	1	1				1			14
Deaths			1	103	1	0				0			105
Injuries			11	750	(*)	3				0			\$ 764
Damage (\$×1,000)			\$ 125.0	4,000.0	(*)	50.0				375.0			\$ 4,550.0
Pennsylvania:													
Number					1				1	2			4
Deaths					0				0	0			0
Injuries					(*)				0	0			(*)
Damage (\$×1,000)					100.0				(*)	40.0			\$ 140.0
South Carolina:													
Number					2	3				1			6
Deaths					1	0				1			2
Injuries					2	1				2			5
Damage (\$×1,000)					25.0	1.9				100.0			126.9

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 1.—Tornadoes and probable tornadoes—Continued

State ¹	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Annual
South Dakota:													
Number.....							1						1
Deaths.....							0						0
Injuries.....							1						1
Damage (\$×1,000).....							(*)						(*)
Texas:													
Number.....			12		1	3		1					17
Deaths.....			0		0	2		1					3
Injuries.....			15		2	10		15					42
Damage (\$×1,000).....			130.1		5.0	510.0		35.0					680.1
West Virginia:													
Number.....									1				1
Deaths.....									0				0
Injuries.....									0				0
Damage (\$×1,000).....									0				0
Wisconsin:													
Number.....			1	1	1				1				4
Deaths.....			0	1	0				0				1
Injuries.....			1	0	0				2				3
Damage (\$×1,000).....			6.0	100.0	(*)				25.0				131.0
Wyoming:													
Number.....							1						1
Deaths.....							0						0
Injuries.....							0						0
Damage (\$×1,000).....							(*)						(*)
United States:													
Number ²	9		30	23	24	26	5	3	11	1	1	3	136
Deaths.....	42		1	144	2	3	0	1	1	1	0	3	198
Injuries.....	416		47	876	14	123	1	15	6	4	2	0	1,504
Damage (\$×1,000).....	2,257.5		1,404.1	7,683.0	538.0	8,878.9	141.0	41.0	703.5	50.0	(*)	27.5	21,724.5

¹ None reported for States not listed.
² Additional not included.
³ Many.
⁴ Several thousand.

⁵ Considerable.
⁶ Slight.
⁷ A few.
⁸ Corrected for boundary-crossing tornado.

